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Mark Drabenstott is a seasoned observer of regional development and policy issues whose insights have gained national and international recognition. Mark is a native of Markle, Indiana, where he grew up on his family's farm and learned agriculture and basketball firsthand. Mark earned his bachelor's degree from Earlham College and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Iowa State University.

Mark was named founding director of RUPRI's national Center for Regional Competitiveness at the University of Missouri-Columbia in September 2006. The Center helps regions craft world-class development strategies for competing in the global economic race. The Center's products help regions understand where they stand in that race, diagnose their new competitive advantage, and sustain innovative models of regional governance. The Center is also part of the University of Missouri's Truman School of Public Affairs.

Mark has engaged leading topics related to regional development and related policies throughout his career. He spent 25 years in the Federal Reserve System, and led the creation and development of the Center for the Study of Rural America. He has been a prolific researcher, writing more than 150 articles and editing 10 books. He has shared his economic and policy insights very widely. Throughout his career, Mark has given more than 1,000 presentations to audiences throughout the nation and beyond. He has also been invited to share his policy insights with Congress on numerous occasions.

Mark's is actively involved in global efforts to understand the new frontier of regional competitiveness. He is chairman of the OECD's Territorial Development Policy Committee, the premier global forum on regional development policy. In 2005 he was selected to chair a U.S. Department of Commerce advisory panel that conducted the first major review of federal economic development in 40 years. He has also advised the World Bank.

RUPRI is a multi-state, interdisciplinary public policy institute that is jointly sponsored by Iowa State University, the University of Missouri, and the University of Nebraska. RUPRI has an international public policy portfolio with more than 250 scholars representing 16 different disciplines in 100 universities throughout the United States and 25 other nations.

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